

**MEDINA CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**

June 7, 2004  
7:00 PM

Medina City Hall  
501 Evergreen Point Road

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Council members Miles Adam, Drew Blazey, Katie Phelps, Bob Rudolph, Pete Vall-Spinosa, and Mayor Mary Odermat.

Absent/Excused Deputy Mayor Todd Nunn

Staff Present: City Manager Doug Schulze, City Attorney Kirk Wines, Planning Director Joseph Gellings and Recording Secretary Carol Wedlund.

**CALL TO ORDER**--The meeting of the Medina City Council was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**--Mayor Odermat announced the purpose of tonight's quasi-judicial hearing was to consider a Special Use Permit for Medina Elementary School. She requested that members of the audience who wished to speak to complete speaker cards, which were subject to public disclosure laws in the State of Washington. Mayor Odermat opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Planning Director Gellings noted the applicant was requesting a Special Use Permit to renew the educational use of this property through replacement of the Medina Elementary School building. He noted the Council had received copies of the latest letters from residents. Planning Director Gellings furnished background information regarding the project. He also noted Bellevue School District personnel and their consultants had done an excellent job on this project, including holding four community school meetings. Planning Director Gellings relayed groundbreaking would not occur for another year, and clarified if any of the design resolution went in a direction inconsistent with the proposal before the Council, it would be returned to them for review.

**John Amanat, Capital Construction Manager for Bellevue School District, 12037 NE 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Bellevue, 98005**, relayed a bond issue had been passed authorizing Bellevue School District to modernize its schools. Children attending Medina Elementary would be transferred to Bellewood Elementary School during the demolition and reconstruction process.

**Imad Bahbah, architect for McGranahan Architects, 2111 Pacific, Suite 100, Tacoma, 98402**, furnished background information and outlined the steps he and members of his architectural firm had taken, including garnering input through community meetings. The site plan represented the culmination of goals and ideas. One of the main concerns had been safety and separation of traffic and circulation. The primary vehicular circulation strategy was to separate parent drop-off and pick up from that for school bus loading operations. That had been accomplished through dedication of one loop for parental drop-off and another one for buses, so that neither traffic stream would overlap or interfere with the intersection of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. The purpose of the separate traffic patterns was to keep the intersection clear for students. They had left the playfield the way it was currently configured. Further, they had recognized the park-like setting of the site and had enhanced it with several specialized gardens. He noted the earth garden would double as an amphitheater. Building massing had been optimally modulated to create visual interest and to fit into the neighborhood. When asked by a Council member about light monitors, Mr. Bahbah responded a representative from Seattle Lighting would conduct a light study to see how well light monitors would work in the classrooms. Planning Director Gellings indicated he had not included pure aesthetic matters for the soccer field into the Special Use Permit, but had incorporated visual and noise screening as well as sight lines for safety. Another Council member inquired about the necessity of converting the walkway along Overlake Drive West to concrete, noting it was currently gravel. Mr. Bahbah responded the School District would not be opposed to leaving the sidewalk in its present gravel state. A Council member noted that money could be better spent for grass on site. Another Council member expressed concern about the lack of bathrooms in the south classroom pods, and was informed that issue had been addressed in the revised plan. It was also suggested there be more drinking fountains in the proposed school.

Mayor Odermat opened the public hearing to audience participation at 7:42 p.m.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**Margaret Maxwell, 8040 NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street**, stated she lived across from the school entrance, and had been impacted by the traffic. She emphasized it was important to have a sidewalk continue on the south side of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Otherwise, people would be walking in the street. She also noted the lack of climbing structures in the play area. Further, backstops on the street side should be taller. Ms. Maxwell also felt she would receive the full brunt of the proposed structure. Ms. Maxwell also requested that the Special Use Permit indicate it was for elementary school use only. She also suggested the children have access to an outdoor bathroom.

**Patrick Holcomb, 7488 Overlake Drive West**, asked about construction duration, and Mr. Bahbah responded the proposed school should be completed by August of 2005. Mr. Holcomb also inquired about hours of operation and whether or not construction traffic would be off site, and was informed the construction hours would be 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and construction parking would either be on site or the workers would be bussed from another location. Mr. Holcomb also asked about crossing guards, to which Mr. Bahbah responded they would be posted at the crosswalk in front of the main entrance to the school. Mayor Odermat stated the city had a traffic control plan on file, and Mr. Holcomb was welcome to review it. Mr. Holcomb's last question related to lighting during or after construction time, and Mr. Gellings indicated there would be no increase in overall lighting intensity on the site.

**Ron Santi, 7842 NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street**, submitted a color picture to the Council for review. He took exception to a statement no territorial views would be altered. Mr. Santi also seconded Ms. Maxwell's request that the facility remain an elementary school. He read a prepared statement into the record. Mr. Santi felt the School District was asking for a special privilege.

**Heija Nunn, 7668 NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street**, thanked the School District staff for responding to citizens' needs regarding sight lines for the playfield, and for designing more appealing and safe parking access. She suggested the substation might be used for bathroom facilities. Ms. Nunn also indicated the demographics of Medina could change, so the facility should not be solely designated for elementary school use.

**Allyson Jackson, 7633 NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street**, thought the money designated for a concrete sidewalk along Overlake Drive West could be used for a higher need area. She also cautioned the city should ensure safe access for children walking to school along the south side of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Mr. Bahbah noted Director of Public Works Jahn had requested no sidewalk on the south side of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, in order to deter jaywalking, and to discourage children from moving back and forth on both sides of the street during peak hours. Mr. Gellings observed to the west of the school there was no sidewalk on either side of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. If the Medina Grocery opened, there was a possibility of a sidewalk being added to that segment on the north side. However, the entire channelization plan had been to keep children away from the bus and parent drop off routes. City Manager Schulze added the Council would be requested to take action on the six-year Capital Improvement Plan on Monday, June 14, 2004, which would also include continuing the sidewalk on the north side of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Terry Gibson, Gibson Traffic Consultants, 4610 – 131<sup>st</sup> St. Ct. NW, Gig Harbor, 98232**, relayed he was trying to move children to the north side of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and was attempting to get as many parents as possible to park and to drop off on site. The plan was to get the students to cross at the central crosswalk.

In response to an inquiry regarding whether or not the playground area had decreased, Mr. Bahbah responded no playground area had been lost, and in fact the two play areas were as large if not bigger than what was presently on the site. He indicated some of the illegal play structures would be removed and replaced with new equipment.

**Andrew Cottrill, of McGranahan Architects**, added the site would have a flagpole. Mr. Amanat relayed the student population in the next ten years was not expected to increase, and the Bellevue School District had no plans to change school boundaries.

Mayor Odermat inquired of City Attorney Wines whether a condition could be imposed that the facility remain an elementary school, and whether the city could mandate an upper limit on the number of schools within its boundaries. City Attorney Wines thought the city would have difficulty trying to limit what the School District could do with its property or attempting to enforce the number of schools in Medina. Further, the city's concern was with the zoning controls on the property.

**Kristen Edelnertz, 8215 NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street**, relayed she had attended the community meetings and was in support of the proposed plan. She wanted the gravel walkway on Overlake Drive West to remain. Ms. Edelnertz also expressed concern about a way to get across 84<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, and suggested limiting the east entrance. **Council member Vall-Spinosa agreed, adding there should be a sidewalk on both sides of the road at that location.**

**Ron Whited, 1959 Evergreen Point Road,** asked if tonight's meeting would include the Council's vote on the Medina School Special Use Permit. Mayor Odermat indicated the school district had some time constraints, and the Council would vote on the issue at this meeting. As a parent of an infant, Mr. Whited was of the opinion the demolition and rebuilding of Medina Elementary would impact surrounding residences, and that should be taken into consideration. He was also amazed by the amount of red tape involved in the building process. Mr. Whited also inquired about building code enforcement in Medina. He had been through the inspection process many times and believed it to be insufficient. He inquired whether Medina planned to have more inspectors. Medina Elementary was a large project which would shortly be approved. Did the city have the enforcement ability? He thought other cities did a better job than Medina.

Mayor Odermat indicated the city did a very adequate job of enforcing its code, given the resources it had with staff. She suggested Mr. Whited submit any valid complaints in writing to the city. Mr. Whited reiterated his concern about enforcement of the building code. A Council member stated the Council had gone through the building permit process during the May Study Session. During that Study Session, the Building Official had admitted Medina had three times as many inspections as King County required. Therefore, the Council would be hard pressed to say Medina needed more inspections than it already had. Mr. Whited was in agreement with the number of inspections. It was the quality he was concerned with, as he did not think there was adequate staff in the field.

City Manager Schulze stated an applicant had an opportunity to revise plans throughout the process. Some of the very large projects had hundreds of revisions. That was why one might not necessarily see what was permitted as the same thing at the end of the project. Code enforcement was something Medina had always approached with a response to complaints. It had improved over the last couple of years, because the Inspector checked properties other than those for which she had an appointment. Mr. Whited stated the city no longer had Lowell Erickson as its Building Official, and he was concerned about that.

**Mark Nelson, 1233 Evergreen Point Road,** indicated he was speaking as a citizen and as a parent of three children who had attended Medina Elementary School. His children still used the facilities. He had reviewed the school plans as an architect and as a Planning Commission member. Mr. Nelson asked if the plan before the Council was the one they were approving, as it was different than the one in his Council packet.

Mr. Gellings stated the city's policy with all land use applications was drawings were developed to a point to allow staff to make a decision. There would be lots of design refinement before ground was broken. The test would be if any of the refinements changed the character that was portrayed to the Council tonight. He indicated the Council should respond to and act upon the original application and let staff decide whether refinements were beyond approval scope. He relayed if siting were changed the application would be returned to the Council because it would then be a different character.

Mr. Nelson wanted to know which plans were being reviewed tonight. He also indicated the site plans in the Council packets were well done. Mr. Nelson supported comments about the walkway to the north. He was concerned about height modulation. There were still 35 foot tall walls that faced residential properties.

Mayor Odermat closed the audience participation portion of the public hearing at 8:34 p.m.

A Council member requested a new packet with all the changes depicted on the white board be furnished to the Council, so they would have for the record what was approved. Another Council member noted if there were substantial changes, they would come back to the Council at a later date. City Attorney Wines was asked if the outdoor bathroom and the drinking fountains were part of the scope of what the Council was approving. City Attorney Wines stated there were detailed plumbing, fire and electrical codes that must be met. He did not know whether those codes addressed drinking fountains or outdoor bathrooms; they were outside the scope of the Council's purview.

City Attorney Wines requested that Mr. Bahbah mark each exhibit. Mr. Bahbah marked each one numerically.

**Andrew Cottrill, McGranahan Architects,** indicated there had been no additional square footage added, and the changes were simply cost reduction matters. A few of the deep modulations had been removed. The majority of the elements in the school remained the same. Further, the setbacks had increased on all sides. The classroom pods had been moved together to reduce glazing area setbacks. He also indicated the perimeter lineal footage of the building had been reduced. However, the character of the building remained unchanged.

Mr. Bahbah added a construction document level estimate would be done prior to going to bid. If there were adjustments to be made, they generally happened before going to bid. He stated the estimated budget was \$13.5 million. However, with the proposed modifications, that amount had been reduced by \$2 million. Their goal was quality education and safety to the students, which would not be compromised in any way.

Mayor Odermat asked Planning Director Gellings how he would determine what would come back to the Council for review. Planning Director Gellings responded staff tended to be very conservative in reviewing changes and determining whether any of them were within the scope of the original approval. Any changes that came closer to the property line or increased the perceived bulk would come before the Council.

Compatibility – Planning Director Gellings stated he would be able to determine whether the refinements were within the scope of review. He noted changing from steel to wood had been with reference to the internal structure, and would not be seen. A Council member wanted to ensure any further changes would not make the school look like a box.

Setbacks – No concerns.

Landscaping – Mayor Odermat asked City Attorney Wines if the Council could impose a grassy field as a condition, and he responded affirmatively. **Colin MacRae, of the Bellevue School District**, responded the City of Bellevue and the City of Clyde Hill had entered into a cooperative agreement regarding field enhancements. The Council wished to impose a grassy field as a condition attached to the permit.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation Plan – Mayor Odermat thought the Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation Plan had been well designed. A Council member requested that the last sentence under that section be removed, “Another key aspect of the pedestrian plan is the switching of Overlake Drive and 81<sup>st</sup> Avenue NE sidewalks from gravel to concrete.” By consensus, the Council decided to remove the last sentence under Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation Plan.

Lighting – No questions.

Safety – Mayor Odermat mentioned her safety concerns had been eliminated with the condensing of the building.

Parking – A Council member questioned whether there should be a handicapped parking spot at the school entrance in addition to the two already depicted. Mr. Bahbah stated the benefit to placing the handicapped parking spots in the bus loading area was there was not much auto traffic there. He conceded three handicapped spots might be needed, but he would evaluate the safest location when it was determined how many more would be considered necessary.

Height – The Council unanimously supported a maximum building height of 35 feet.

Massing – A Council member thought the architects had made a noble attempt to break up the massing with modulation. The smallest dimension was facing toward the residences.

Land Use Designation – It was noted the school property was designated for that usage in the Medina Municipal Code.

Minimum Lot Area – No questions.

Maximum Lot Coverage – No questions.

The Council discussed the recommendations outlined in the staff report. Planning Director Gellings suggested the final lighting design be subject to staff approval. He also indicated bare minimum lighting was needed at night. The Council decided there should be a new section 2.c in the recommendations which would address the requirement for a grassy soccer field 200 by 300 feet, rather than dirt. A Council member added the new plan removed a lot of green area for the second parking lot. Therefore, it made sense to ensure the field was grassy. A Council member asked about maintenance of that field, and another Council member suggested an option could be quality artificial turf. Another Council member commented it was incumbent upon the District to maintain the landscaping for the school. **Colin MacRae, of the Bellevue School District**, stated to maintain the area would take away from general funds which paid teachers. Mayor Odermat inquired whether the Public Works crew could mow the playfield during

the summer. City Manager Schulze indicated maintaining the playfield during the summer could be done by the Public Works Crew, since they were already mowing in the area anyway. He also noted the City of Bellevue had scheduling rights for use of the playfield facilities. He would have to talk to the School District personnel. The Council wanted to ensure the design of the school and site improvements adhered to the mitigation measures listed in the May 2004 report by Gibson Traffic Consultants, Inc.

The fourth staff recommendation discussed the walkway along the north side of the primary loop road only extending to the last parking space and not to NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Planning Director Gellings stated if there were a stub of a walkway there, sooner or later someone would use it. Therefore, he suggested only bringing the sidewalk to where it would serve the loop.

Council member Blazey moved, seconded by Council member Adam, to approve the Medina Elementary School Special Use Permit, with the two requested conditions. Planning Director Gellings summarized the requested changes as changing the playfield surface to grass and keeping the sidewalk on Overlake Drive West in its current gravel state. City Attorney Wines suggested adding to that authorizing the Mayor to sign a written decision of approval, including findings of fact, conditions of approval and conclusions. Mayor Odermat voiced appreciation to the Bellevue School District and to Planning Director Gellings for their efforts with the proposed Medina Elementary School.

Mayor Odermat closed the public hearing at 9:26 p.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Council member Adam moved, seconded by Council member Blazey, to adjourn the special public hearing at 9:26 p.m., and the motion carried unanimously.

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Mayor Mary Odermat

Attest:

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Caroll P. Wedlund, Recording Secretary